

Millbrook CofE Primary School

Blindwell Hill, Millbrook, Torpoint, Cornwall PL10 1BG

Inspection dates

31 January–1 February 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies considerably across the school because activities planned do not ensure that pupils' specific learning needs are met.
- Too many pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable. Teachers do not challenge the most able pupils sufficiently or make sure they reach higher standards. Teachers sometimes do not notice errors in pupils' work.
- Teachers' views on the progress and attainment of pupils are not accurate enough. Assessments made do not closely match the standards seen in pupils' books.
- Teachers do not have the subject knowledge they need to be able to teach reading well. Consequently, pupils in key stage 2 do not make the progress they should in reading.
- By Year 6, not enough pupils use the skills, ideas or vocabulary in their writing needed to reach the standards expected for their age.
- Teachers do not always follow the school's approach to the teaching of handwriting and teachers' expectations for the presentation of pupils' work are not high enough.
- Pupils are not clear how to improve their spelling and grammar when writing.

The school has the following strengths

- The school is rapidly improving, following the arrival of a new head of school. She has already secured the confidence and trust of pupils, parents and staff. Improvements have started in mathematics. Pupils' progress has improved as a result.
- The school benefits from support provided by the multi-academy trust. An academy principal and a board of directors provide strong support and challenge. Teachers appreciate the extra professional development that the trust provides.
- Children benefit from effective teaching in the Reception class. Due to the interesting learning environments and activities, both inside and outside, children really enjoy their learning.
- The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils is improving rapidly.
- Personal development, welfare and behaviour are good. A set of core values permeates the school. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. They feel safe and well cared for.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is at least good, by:
 - improving the teaching of handwriting and spelling
 - raising teachers' expectations of the presentation of pupils' work
 - planning learning that is based on an accurate assessment of what pupils already know, can do and understand
 - building a stronger culture of reading, particularly in Years 3 to 6
 - developing teachers' subject knowledge so that they can teach reading well.
- Ensure that pupils make at least good progress across the school, by:
 - raising teachers' expectations further, particularly for the most able pupils
 - ensuring that pupils understand what they need to do to improve their writing
 - checking that teachers' assessments of pupils' work are accurate so that any changes needed to improve progress are made quickly.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The new head of school provides effective leadership and is ambitious for the pupils and for the future of the school. She understands the school's strengths well. She listens carefully and includes everyone. Pupils notice this, saying, 'our head listens to what we think' and, 'the school was grey; now it's colourful.' Staff feel proud to work at the school. The school is bright and cheerful – full of interesting areas that celebrate learning. Parents also are full of praise for the changes they see.
- Leaders at all levels are clear about the key areas of weakness at the school and are making the improvements necessary. The quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' achievement is improving rapidly but is not yet good. A legacy of weaker practice is yet to be fully addressed and for some teachers, expectations are not yet high enough.
- Subject leaders have strong support from the head of school and are developing their effectiveness. Recent improvements to checking pupils' progress are helping leaders to know the strengths and weaknesses in subjects across the school better than previously.
- Leaders insist upon a strong moral focus with a set of values that threads through the school's work. Assemblies explore these values and help pupils to see examples of how each can affect their lives. Pupils have a real sense of what is right and wrong. They take responsibility for their actions, understanding the effect they have on others. Leaders and other adults in school know pupils' families well and they create a secure, safe learning environment in which pupils feel well supported.
- The rich curriculum provides interesting topics and pupils use computers effectively for research. Pupils enjoy their learning, including their homework. 'My children love going to Millbrook. They are inspired and excited to learn' was typical of the comments made by parents.
- Leaders use additional funding to improve physical education and sports provision very well. There are now high levels of participation across the school in a wide variety of sports. Evaluations of the impact of sports teaching and additional clubs lead to changes in provision. For example, to improve the balance in the participation of boys and girls in football, a league competition now attracts an equal balance of boys and girls. Many enjoy playing football at lunchtimes, led by a sports coach.
- Leaders ensure that additional funding supports disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in order to meet their specific needs. Extra professional development on how to support pupils' emotional well-being is ensuring that pupils now receive the support they need to thrive. As a result, these pupils are making good progress.
- The six schools within the multi-academy trust (MAT) are a helpful resource where leaders and teachers can work collaboratively in areas such as the early years, mathematics, English, religious education and the leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is contributing well to improvements being secured at Millbrook.
- The head of school has a wide range of strong support from the MAT to draw upon. In

particular, the academy principal, who visits often, provides support and challenge, and ensures that improvement moves on at a pace. The two leaders have formed a cohesive partnership that is tackling the changes needed. The principal oversees staff appraisal processes. These are well organised, thorough and robust.

Governance of the school

- The directors know the school well and they provide effective governance.
- There is no local governing body, but a board of directors oversees the six schools in the MAT. Recent and significant changes to membership of the board have ensured that the board now includes directors with a wide range of skills. Together, they communicate a strong vision for ensuring that Millbrook thrives and provides the best possible education for pupils. There are clear lines of accountability. An academy improvement partner visits the school during the year to check progress against the school's improvement plan. The directors appropriately challenge the information they are given. A parent partnership group ensures that parents' views are considered.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Teachers and support staff receive strong professional development in a wide range of safeguarding issues including preventing radicalisation and keeping children safe from exploitation. Risk assessments are of a high quality. Recruitment is safely organised. Records of any concerns about pupils are well organised, and external agencies are involved when needed to ensure that all pupils are safe. A recent audit of safeguarding describes 'a strong safety culture within the school'.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement because over time the quality of teaching has varied too much across the school. Teaching is not yet securing pupils' good rates of progress across a range of subjects due to a legacy of weaker practice.
- Teaching does not routinely take into account pupils' learning needs. This leads to weak development of pupils' understanding, knowledge and skills. For example, pupils, particularly the most able, find that some of their work is too easy. They already understand and can do the tasks set. As a result, their progress is slow.
- The assessments that teachers make about how well pupils are doing help leaders to check pupils' progress through the year. However, some assessments made are not accurate when compared with standards in pupils' books.
- The expectations of some teachers are not high enough. This is particularly evident in the quality of pupils' handwriting, spelling and the presentation of work in their books. The approach to the teaching of handwriting is not followed closely enough by teachers. As a result, pupils do not take pride in their work. The quality of the teaching of writing is also too variable. Pupils' errors are not always noticed, so they do not learn from their mistakes. Many find it difficult to spot what they need to do to correct

their spelling and grammatical errors when writing and therefore the same mistakes continue.

- Teachers do not have the subject knowledge they need to assess pupils' skills accurately in reading. Therefore, they do not plan specific learning activities to help pupils move forward in their reading. Activities during reading lessons do not consistently interest pupils or help them to want to read more widely.
- Work has started to improve the quality of teaching in mathematics and the MAT provides support for this. There has been a focus on developing pupils' basic mathematics skills as well as ensuring that they regularly apply the skills to solve problems.
- In Reception, the needs of children are carefully observed and activities are then matched to move learning forward in specific areas. The quality of teaching is good.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel safe, learn how to be safe and they are safe. Extra activities promote a wide understanding of how pupils can protect themselves from specific dangers.
- Pupils can explain about different sorts of bullying and who they would go to if they need help. Pupils understand about keeping safe online. Parents agree that the school helps pupils keep safe.
- The school has invested in additional support for pupils who need help to manage their emotions and personal development. This extra help has made a significant impact, enabling some pupils to make better progress in their personal development.
- Attitudes to learning are strong. Pupils appreciate the wide range of activities both in and outside the classroom. Pupils enjoy additional homework activities and the results are often of high quality.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The head of school sets high expectations of how pupils should speak to one another and to adults. Pupils conduct themselves well around the school, both inside and outside. They are well prepared for their futures.
- Pupils' behaviour for learning is good and plays a strong part in their rapidly improving progress. They are enthusiastic about the activities planned and persevere with challenges when tackling new tasks.
- Pupils care for each other well. There is plenty for them to do at playtimes and staff make positive contributions to ensuring pupils' enjoyment. Sports coaches provide good opportunities for pupils to enjoy physical activities. Pupils support and encourage each other well during these activities.
- In the past, attendance has been too low, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. The head of school has been working closely with pupils and their families and there are

several examples of pupils who have significantly improved their attendance. As a result, attendance so far this year is higher than at the same point in the previous year. The very strong communication, high expectations and support to families offered by the head of school are contributing to pupils' improved attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils across the school require improvement. In 2015, Year 6 pupils achieved standards that were above average. A greater proportion of pupils reached and exceeded the expected levels when compared to other pupils nationally. However, in 2016, pupils' attainment and progress fell, particularly in mathematics, and was below average. Too few of the most able pupils reached the higher levels. The school did not raise its expectations of pupils in response to the increased demand of the new national curriculum and assessment that took place from 2015.
- Effective leadership and improving teaching is beginning to ensure that more pupils are making good progress from their starting points. Improvements are most evident in mathematics where pupils are acquiring the skills necessary for their next steps in education. However, a legacy of weaker progress and some gaps in pupils' learning mean that pupils' outcomes are not yet good.
- Disadvantaged pupils have extra opportunities to support their progress in reading. There is a whole-school system to celebrate the numbers of books read. However, too few pupils enjoy reading widely. Poetry is not taught consistently across year groups. By the time pupils reach Year 6, their knowledge of a rich vocabulary is limited. As a result of weaknesses in reading, pupils' writing, particularly for the most able, is weaker.
- In Year 2 in 2016, pupils achieved at the expected levels for reading and mathematics, but too few reached expected levels in writing. Pupils' books show that there are signs of improvement but they are still not at the standards expected.
- The effective leadership of special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that pupils receive the extra help they need and their progress is carefully checked. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities progress at least as well as their classmates, particularly in reading and writing.
- Work has started to ensure that pupils are better prepared by the end of Year 6. In mathematics, due to recent improvements to the quality of teaching, progress has improved and more pupils are now working at the level expected for their age. This includes the small number of disadvantaged pupils who receive extra help and, as a result, are making good progress.
- Phonics outcomes in 2016 exceeded national averages. The school's current progress information shows that even more pupils are on track to reach the expected standard this year.

Early years provision

Good

- Children join the school with skills that are broadly typical for their age.
- The number of children who reach a good level of development by the end of Reception and are therefore ready for Year 1 is at, or exceeds, the national average. This has been the case for the past three years and is due to the good teaching and learning that takes place.
- Children enjoy the interesting environments both inside and outside where their contributions are valued and celebrated. Children have lots to get involved with, from the kitchen outside where you can 'make tea' or the digger used to build on the sand, to the cosy sofa inside where you can share a book with a friend. As a result of the stimulating environment and high expectations, children behave well towards each other and adults.
- The quality of teaching and learning in this area of the school is more effective in securing good outcomes than in other areas of the school. Activities closely match the learning needs of children.
- The leader for the early years benefits from being part of the multi-academy trust network of early years teachers and leaders. Leaders have an accurate understanding of strengths and areas for improvement in the Reception class and there is appropriate professional development for staff.
- Safeguarding and welfare arrangements are effective.
- Leaders ensure that additional funding provides the extra adult support that disadvantaged children need to make good progress. The most able pupils also make good progress.
- Children in Reception settle quickly because of the expectations set by adults. Pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour throughout the school start here.
- Parents appreciate the good communication about their child's learning and achievements. They could be even more involved in supporting their child's learning by contributing to the detailed learning journals.

School details

Unique reference number	140334
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10019938

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	113
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Matt Bloomfield
Principal	Julie Simpson
Head of school	Suzy Dyter
Telephone number	01752 822471
Website	www.millbrook.cornwall.sch.uk
Email address	kcastelow@stbarnabasmat.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is the first inspection since the school became part of the St Barnabas Multi-Academy Trust under the umbrella of the Diocese of Truro Academies Company in 2014. There are currently six schools in the trust, all of which are Church of England primary schools, and they are all in south-east Cornwall. A board of directors provides the governance for the schools in the trust. An academy principal who reports to the board of directors leads the schools and each school has a head of school, responsible for the daily running of the school.
- A head of school started in post in May 2016.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website. The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

- This is a smaller-than-average primary school. The majority of pupils are White British.
- Children in the Reception class attend full time.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is slightly below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in all classes, often jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the principal, the head of school, other leaders and three members of the board of directors for the MAT. The lead inspector also met with the academy improvement partner.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised during the inspection. This included the improvement plan, the school's self-evaluation of its performance, the single central record and information related to safeguarding, pupils' progress and attendance.
- Inspectors talked to pupils throughout the inspection and observed lunchtimes. Alongside senior leaders, inspectors looked at pupils' books. An inspector also heard some pupils read.
- Discussions with parents were held throughout the inspection and the 38 responses to the online survey, Parent View, were taken into account.
- The seven completed staff questionnaires were also taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Tonwen Empson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Tracy French

Ofsted Inspector

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